

Sunday School

REVIEW.

September 19, 1909.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."—Acts 19:20.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

M.—Acts 16:6-15. Th.—Acts 18:24-19:10.
T.—Acts 16:23-40. F.—Acts 19:22-41.
W.—Acts 17:10-23. S.—Acts 21:1-17.

SHORTER CATECHISM.

Q. 73. Which is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is, "Thou shalt not steal."

COMMENT.

Frequent reviews are of the last importance. They clearly fix certain great truths in the mind and heart, and they are a great help to the memory. It is not what we read that makes us learned; it is what we remember. It is not what we eat that makes us strong; it is what we digest. We make truth our own by thinking, prayer and practice. Thinking is the gastric juice of the soul. The minister frequently reviews his sermons before he delivers them. The superintendent reviews the Sabbath-school, the teacher his class, the lawyer his briefs and the merchant his ledgers. The review should be clear, thorough and brief, and its prime purpose should be to impress the teacher and pupils with the central truths of the lessons.

The underlying principles of the lessons we now review are missionary. Apostolic Christianity was aggressive. It is not the duty of the church today to regenerate the world; but to publish the truth to all by which the Holy Spirit regenerates, convicts, converts, sanctifies and saves men. The manna was a type of divine grace and if it was kept and not used, it became repulsive. The dead sea is appropriately called "dead," because it receives, but does not give, living water. The river Jordan runs into it; but does not run out. In this country, we would have been savages like our forefathers, if it had not been for the gospel.

Lesson I.—Paul's Second Missionary Journey—Antioch to Philippi. Acts 16:6-15. Being guided by the Spirit, Paul visited certain places whose names are given in the text; and arriving at Troas had a vision of a man inviting him to Macedonia and he went to Philippi, where he conducted a prayer-meeting, composed chiefly of women; and where Lydia was converted. Paul expended his chief energies frequently in the cities and towns and with individuals. "As Paris is, so is France." As the cities are religiously, educationally and socially; so will the surrounding country largely be. How important to seize the centers of our modern civilization and Christianize them! How important to pour the light of the gospel into the dark places where sin is strongly entrenched! Paul was not satisfied to publicly preach the gospel. He tried to save the individual. He preached to Lydia and the jailer; just as Jesus taught Nicodemus and the woman at the well. Do we as parents know what the religious status of the children in our homes is? Are we as Sabbath-school teachers and pastors acquainted with the spiritual condition of our scholars and members?

Lesson II.—Paul's Second Missionary Journey—The Philippian Jailer. Paul and Silas disturbed the city. They were imprisoned. They prayed and praised. God heard them. There was an earthquake. The prison was shaken. The doors were opened. The prisoners were released. The jailer awoke and was about to kill himself; but Paul calmed him with a word; and told him about Jesus, and he and his household became Christians. Signs followed the preaching and sufferings of the apostles. If the truths of the gospel are faithfully, fully and practically taught, we should expect the children and adult people to be converted and true religion is the best salvation of the problems of the day.

Lesson III.—Paul's Second Missionary Journey—Thessalonica and Berea. Acts 17:1-15. The matter of Paul's preaching was not philosophy, nor ethics, nor politics, nor the latest sensation; but the crucifixion, resurrection and divinity of Christ. His sermons were scriptural. Christ can be accounted for only as the Messiah. Many believed the gospel.

The result was persecution, envy and charges of disloyalty to the government. Troubles in communities and churches usually begin with the carnal and not the spiritual. They were sent away to Berea at night by the brethren. The Bereans were more receptive to the truth and investigated for themselves. The Bible is a very honest book and seldom commends any one.

Lesson IV.—Paul's Second Missionary Journey—Athens. The gospel is adapted to the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the old and the young. All have a community of spiritual needs that only the gospel can supply. All need knowledge, righteousness and holiness. One of the greatest needs of the present day is a mission to the rich. Paul preached to cultured Athens and imperial Rome. Lord Macaulay prophesied the fall of the American Republic in this century. Nothing but the principles of the gospel will prevent its dissolution.

Lesson V.—Close of Paul's Second Missionary Journey. Acts 18:1-11. After Paul's marvelous discourse at Athens, he went to Corinth where he remained a year and a half. God has many elect people in that great city that He called, regenerated, justified, adopted and sanctified. Paul's letters to the Christians at Corinth are rich in doctrine, beautiful in diction and practical in character. The length of time that Paul stayed at a place is no authority for short pastorates. Every professional man should have some manual training and sanctified common sense. These open many avenues to hearts to which we wish to tell the gospel story.

Lesson VI.—Paul's Instructions to the Thessalonians.—1 Thess. 5:12-24. This is one of the most practical passages in the New Testament. Religion is a practical thing. It is not simply a theory, a creed, or church membership. It is a life. It honors ministers as Christ's representatives and has directions for the unruly, feeble-minded and weak. It forbids retaliation; and enjoins joy, prayer, thanksgiving and a holy life. The whole selection should be memorized.

Lesson VII.—Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Ephesus. Acts 19:8-20. The great missionary spent three years in this noted town and the Jews and Greeks in Asia heard the truths of religion. He had greater success at Ephesus than he had at Athens. He wrought miracles and rebuked evil.

Lesson VIII.—Paul's Third Missionary Journey. The Riot in Ephesus. Acts 19:23-30, 35-41. Covetousness is one of the greatest sins of this or any age. The love of money is a root of all evil. We do not read of any covetous man in the Bible being saved. When the pocket nerve is touched there is frequently trouble. Paul endangered his life in Ephesus when he antagonized the business of Demetrius. Jesus Christ, Paul, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Jonathan Edwards and many others created great disturbances by their fidelity to truth.

Lesson IX.—Paul on Christian Love. 1 Cor. 13:1-13. The essence of all true religion, like the essence of God, is love. This is the teaching of the Old Testament and the New. Love lies back of the ten commandments. Faith, hope and love are all permanent graces. They abide in this life and the life to come. Love is greater than the others, because of its usefulness.

Lesson X.—Paul's Third Missionary Journey. Farewells. Acts 20:17-35. Paul reminds the representatives of the church at Ephesus of his own faithfulness in preaching and consistency of life, and charges them to take heed to themselves and to all the flock. This is one of the choicest pieces of sacred literature.

Lesson XI.—Close of Paul's Third Missionary Journey. Acts 21:1-17. This journey was replete with touching incidents which we have recently studied and are still fresh to us. God be praised for the missionary triumphs of the past century.

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Christ is for all. All should be for Christ. There are none too hard to reach with the message of love. If our faith were only large enough it would lay hold of this problem with a firmer hand. We are doing too little for these great masses. All told the church to which we belong has not more than seven men, outside a few working as evangelists among the Mexicans in Texas, in all the great field and preaching in other tongues than our own.